The
COMMONWEAL

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A Human Document

IT SHOULD be unnecessary to profess that the views expressed in our leading article on Walter Krivitsky—on whose controversial death we touched briefly last week in an editorial paragraph—are the author's own. It is manifestly impossible to verify all the article's factual details, and no easier to check the credentials of an author admittedly affiliated—in the past if not at present—with underground political activities. But whatever his inspiration and ultimate purpose, THE COMMONWEAL feels that we have come in possession of a first-hand document of considerable contemporary significance: a searching study in human terms of a leader with a conscience caught in the totalitarian machinery of a cause in which he no longer believed, but from which he was unable, both physically and psychologically, to escape.

The Vatican and the "New Order"

SPECTACULAR new weapons such as dive bombers, parachute troops and panzer motorized divisions have taken the spotlight from an even deadlier weapon that precedes and accompanies them. Far too little attention has been given to the important rôle that the lie plays in the nazi aggression program. Intended victims must be thrown off guard by solemn engagements to march no further, innocent leaders and peoples must be falsely accused and good names irreparably undermined, promises of liberty, plenty, justice, peace must win more peoples to enslavement. In times of peril wishful thinking renders men increasingly credulous. Within the nazi orbit these artful lies go virtually unchallenged, and even where publication of denials is possible, the falsifier has all the advantages; the initial wrong impression cannot be sufficiently overcome. The lie is a mighty weapon in the art of modern aggression and Hitler has made the most of it. From the start he has sought to take in Catholics as to his real intentions. Reports of immorality trials, arrests of the clergy, the closing of schools and seminaries have not prevented his agents from seeking to spread the impression that the Church with government help prospers in nazi Germany. A recent attempt of the same stripe is the publication in Ceprano and wide distribution in Italy of a pamphlet, "Germany and the Catholic Religion in Poland," which alleges that there are no restrictions by the Germans on religious worship there, or intentions of restriction, that churches are open all day long, that new churches are being built with construction materials furnished by the civil authorities, etc., etc. All this the courageous *Osservatore Romano* flatly denies, telling for one thing of the western provinces cited in the pamphlet, where "hundreds and hundreds of priests have been sent into exile or are confined in concentration camps where not a few of them have already died. Many parishes are without priests . . . almost all the seminaries are closed. . . ." A more recent issue of the *Osservatore* describes a new crop of malicious rumors, viz.: "that the Holy Father said that it was obligatory to adapt oneself to the New Order in Europe" and that the Holy See had for centuries opposed the democratic form of government, that the Pope had advised France to make peace with Germany to supplant the armistice, that conditions for the Church in Germany are now more satisfactory, that the Holy Office "has pronounced in favor of the 'racial policy of Spain with regard to American nations of the Spanish language.'" *L'Osservatore* comments that "all these stories may have achieved their purpose among weak spirits who sponsor theories and conceptions hostile to Christianity."

These forthright statements from the Vatican clearly substantiate what THE COMMONWEAL has believed all along, but it is no easy task to spike the unconscionable lies of the dictators of Europe.

If Pastor Niemoeller Becomes a Catholic

CONVERSION to the Catholic Faith represents an act of the grace of God and the acceptance of that grace by the heart, intellect and will of the person converted. Essentially grace and acceptance operate in secret regions of the soul: conversion in its acute and mysterious instant never can be fully documented, never humanly explicable. Yet when a man who is a public character, who has expressed

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his convictions publicly and constantly—and especially when he has suffered for them—accepts the doctrines of Catholicism, such a conversion, for intellectual and human reasons, necessarily interests the world. No one may judge souls: it is reasonable to observe what we can of the operations of the human mind.

We think it entirely reasonable for the *Christian Century* to speculate on the rumored conversion to Catholicism—unconfirmed from Catholic sources—of the famous and heroic Pastor Niemoeller, still imprisoned in Germany and still adamant in his refusal to the demands the totalitarian doctrine makes of his conscience. But we are saddened at seeing a Christian journal demonstrate a certain haste to discredit—in order to forestall a possible announcement that he has become a Catholic—a man in whose character Protestants and Catholics alike have seen fortitude and resolution. For the *Christian Century,* this "reincarnation of Martin Luther" is a hero—with reservations. "Niemoeller always has been a believer in authoritarian government; as a political philosophy he has always regarded democracy with scorn. It is not a long step from the rejection of democratic politics to the rejection of democratic religion . . . it must be acknowledged that there is much in the Catholic position in full accord with the Niemoeller temperament." This last phrase we hope may prove to be true: it is, however, in profound contradiction with the sentences which precede it.

Niemoeller was a strong German nationalist: he was also a German Protestant. That these two attributes would lead him to sympathize with "authoritarian government" in view of history is a reasonable assumption. The identification of church and state, the weakening of the spiritual authority of the Protestant Church through identification with nationalism, have been historical constants since the time of Luther. No tendencies, nor any state of fact, could be more opposed both to Catholic doctrine and to that temporal order of Christendom which Catholics throughout the years have seen increasingly endangered through the formation of nationalistic, authoritarian states. We are unable to identify "democratic religion" just as we are unable to identify "democratic" science or "democratic" truth. But if one understands democracy as depending ultimately on respect for the personality and the dignity of man, then it has always been the Catholic Church which has defended democracy against all despotism and totalitarianism.

It seems quite probable that Niemoeller passed through a period of too extreme devotion to the German state and of unwise toleration for those forces which he saw strengthening it. To draw from this the conclusion that he is therefore logically predisposed to acceptance of the Catholic position is a grave error. Should this brave man come to share our Faith, his conversion will be possible only because he will have learned from the dreadful demonstration of totalitarianism the dangers inherent in those radically anti-Catholic errors which in Germany and elsewhere produced the totalitarian state under which he suffers.

Another Plea for Feeding Europe

THE OFFICIAL criticism of Mr. Hoover's latest project for feeding the hungry in Europe seems to us, on the face of it, not very compelling. To say, as Mr. Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State, has done, that international law requires Germany to supply food to the peoples whose territories she occupies, contributes nothing; less than nothing, since our government has on occasion deliberately indicated that it does not trust Germany to be governed by international law. The attitude in Washington is of course a reflection of the British reluctance to permit any sort of Continental feeding scheme. That reluctance is understandable, since Britain's weapon in the mortal struggle is the blockade; but it is also, in our view and that of many other Americans, answerable, and it would seem to be the duty of our government to try to find the answer and convince Britain by it, instead of hollowly echoing a *non possumus* to which Americans are not entitled in logic or humanity. Specifically, it would seem to be the government's duty to examine Mr. Hoover's latest plan with the respectful attention due to a public man whose purpose is to keep human beings from starving, and whose competence in the matter cannot be challenged. Some months ago, Mr. Hoover's Committee on Food for Small Democracies put forward a general feeding project. They have now withdrawn it in favor of a restricted experiment in Belgium, to ascertain whether under carefully controlled conditions it is not possible to feed the populace without giving aid and comfort to the conqueror. They propose to begin by caring for no more than three millions (two-thirds of them children). Soup kitchens would be used, to insure distribution on the spot. The German government would be required to agree not to take away further native food supplies. The stock of relief food would be kept purposely small, so that even if it were seized, it would bring little advantage to the Germans; and if it *was* seized, the plan would by agreement be given up as an admitted failure. The need in Europe grows worse; Belgium and Norway are trying to replace exhausted bread supplies in Soviet Russia; they cannot secure fats or meats anywhere; the other small countries approach the same predicament. How can we take the responsibility of rejecting a rational and humane scheme to save these millions of lives?

Mr. Hoover's Plan

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What Next for the American Farmer?

THE SIX PERCENT rise in farm income to nine billions tends to obscure the fact that producers of cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco and rice are plenty worried. Domestic consumption continues to rise with the temporary defense boom, but in pre-war years a high proportion of the annual production of those five crops went to foreign, principally European markets. For instance, at least 20 percent of the market for US cotton has been cut off (4/5 of the foreign market). Surpluses at record levels at the start of the war are now piling up even further. Congress, because of defense expenditures, may want to cut the present $700,000,000 annual benefit and parity payments. Farm legislation is expected to follow decision on the lend-lease bill and vigorous agitation for various remedial schemes is under way. Most of the proposals in one form or another have been around before: domestic allotment plans; government barter or sales of surpluses in foreign markets; the securing of parity prices through federal loans, government purchases and processing taxes. Cotton goods stamps worth up to $25 per family are already available as payment for crop reduction in that commodity and it is proposed that the food and cotton stamp plans be further extended (they are already in operation in 250 communities throughout the nation). Also familiar is the good proposal that cotton farmers be given further inducement to turn more land to growing foods rich in nutritional content. But the suggestion with the most interesting possibilities—social, economic and political—would extend the commodity stamp plan to the whole Western Hemisphere. Through barter arrangements probably conducted by respective governments lower income groups would share each other's surpluses. The poor up here would have more bananas, for instance, and those below the Rio Grande would have more bread. A scheme worth working on.

Hemisphere Commodity Stamps?

A Novelist Passes

ELIZABETH recorded the last World War in a novel, "Christine." The present one was presumably too much even for a talent that had grown steadily more disillusioned with the years. The life of this impredictable writer had a geographical compass which somehow matched her brilliant and ambiguous literary gift. Australian-born, taken by one titled marriage to Prussia and by a second to England, she died in South Carolina. Her long series of books has, despite their "specialness," spanned the generations, the last one pleasing the mordant taste of the grandchildren whose grandmothers had enjoyed with gentlewomanly merriment the first. But it is probably neither "Mr. Skeffington" nor "Elizabeth and Her German Garden," which will be remembered longest. The one is a climax of that strain that began perhaps as a mere impish fling at prudery, but grew to disconcert the judicious as such things will; and for all the original charm of the "German Garden," its vitality is chiefly in its title. Elizabeth had more precious wares than these. In books like "Father," "The Pastor's Wife," most of all "The Enchanted April," she gave her readers little, biting, rememberable pictures interfused with some of the happiest mirth they will ever know.

Elizabeth and Skeffington

Japan Meets Opposition

HOW IT came about is a long, complicated story, but it does appear to be more and more the case that economic intercourse is subject almost utterly to political and military considerations. Producers and traders in Jugoslavia, for instance, are unable to sell their goods where they can, theoretically, get the best price. Politics and power dictate where and for what they can dispose of their wares. American exporters find similar restrictions checking their freedom of trade abroad, in the Far East almost as stringently as in Europe. The Japanese Ambassador, Admiral Nomura, is reported to have observed to the press that Japan has to expand for economic objectives . . . "because of the present state of the world where economic blocs have been formed Japan cannot rely upon obtaining necessary materials from a long distance, and so must arrange to obtain them closer at hand." Japan apparently refuses to see that this country finds her very much responsible indeed for this change in economic processes and the relationship between politics, war and economics. Anyway, Japan must certainly see that the US dislikes immensely the formation of economic blocs that cut off sections of the world from our market area, and this dislike is intensified to something more when the process carries along with it war, domination, and a contempt for moral considerations which are not only considered associated (in most imperfect fashion) with the old way of doing things, but also with natural law, human nature and religion. In the Far East, Japan strikes America at every level, from that of sordid self-interest to that of religious morality . . . and Japan is much more vulnerable to the US than the US is to Japan. No wonder the American government's Pacific policy and action are increasingly tough. America ought not be oblivious to the overwhelming difficulties of reviving an expiring *laissez-faire* international capitalism; and Japan must not so blandly overlook the impossibility of the world permitting her to set up a "new era" in the Far East according to her own sweet egoism.

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Walter G. Krivitsky

A study of a man whose life was hidden behind his political significance.

By **Paul Wohl**

*Dieu a fait les hommes droits; mais ils ont cherché beaucoup de détours.**

HAD KRIVITSKY come to America in the plenitude of his cryptic powers as he intended to in 1937, those who slandered him in 1939 would have spoken of him with awe and admiration. The few privileged to converse with him would have whispered reverently and with importance to their intimates in the most select and conspiratorial circles of "progressive" thought the message of this mysterious emissary of the Kremlin, the small wiry man with bushy red eyebrows, the dreaded commissar who could combine revolutionary discipline with urbane manners and political intransigeance with brilliant versatility.

Krivitsky was the first of those close to the inner councils of the Kremlin who stepped out of the ranks without seeking refuge in another revolutionary group. He refused to join Trotsky who publicly sneered: "Krivitsky has fled into the petty bourgeoisie; he has become a democrat." He did not join the Russian Social Democrats or Mensheviks and turned down the invitations of the many Marxist factions who would have exulted in his conversion to their particular interpretation of political philosophy. Walter Krivitsky was the one prominent Bolshevik who did not try to be anything else than that which he was: a poor man who stood at the crossroad of his life at the age of forty and had the courage to say: "That which we have done was bad. We did not want it thus. How it happened I cannot explain."

If this trained dialectician had given one of the many superficial and pretentiously "scientific" explanations dear to our "liberal" rationalists, he might have stunned their emancipated masterminds. Instead, he simply revealed that which actually had happened. In his first articles which we wrote together in Europe he strictly avoided interpretations. His American articles too are based on his personal observations and on the experience of his closest friends, though—at the request of his American literary collaborator—occasionally he tried to interpret the tragedy he had witnessed. He gave these interpretations hesitatingly; he felt their insufficiency in the face of the enormity of the events and he suffered under the shifting contradictions in which, as he wrote, he became involved. "These articles will be my death," he told me in the beginning. "My head is deep in the earth," again and again he complained.

No other Bolshevik ever left the Soviet world to become so lonely and desperate as Krivitsky. Trotsky made himself the center of a new party. Scheinmann, ex-president of the Soviet State Bank, made a financial arrangement with his former chiefs and was allowed to live abroad in precarious peace. Barmine was a diplomat who through his functions had mingled with the so-called bourgeois world. His wife had never lived in the orbit of the revolution. It was easy for him to establish normal contact with his new surroundings. Besides, he was a young, healthy man of peasant stock, a skilled mechanic able to make a living anywhere.

Krivitsky's forces were exhausted. He had lived during the last years the tense life of a secret agent, of the chief political agent of the Soviet Union in Western and Central Europe. The world into which he fled was a hostile world which originally he had set out to destroy and to which he could not now adjust himself. His less courageous intellectual brethren among us did not facilitate the transition. They, who never had been in the dilemma of perhaps having to give up their lives for their cause, who combined easily the comforts of a "legal," bourgeois existence with revolutionary opinions, have heaped abuse and slander on Krivitsky. Albeit, he rendered them the greatest service. His apparently so incredible revelations have been confirmed. The few interpretative distortions which resulted from the clash between this mind formed in the Soviet world and the conceptions of his American associates were accidental. They cannot diminish his historical merit.

Krivitsky was not afraid of accusing himself. He exposed that which he knew and that which he had seen. His articles and his book are a lasting monument. Those who ignored them deliberately chose to go forward into crime. Alas, only few learned the lesson and even they did not pardon him for having shattered their illusions. They

* This French version of Ecclesiastes vii. 30 is thus rendered in the Douay-Rheims translation: "God made man right, and he hath entangled himself with an infinity of questions."

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had neither love nor pity for him—even after his death.

Krivitsky's character

Krivitsky was not a golem, not a ruthless fanatic, not an underground gang leader, but a sensitive, nervous intellectual, a man whose life had been divided between Russia and Western Europe, between dutiful, believing party members and critical individuals in the bourgeois world. He knew both worlds: the walled-up, one-purpose world of the communist militants and the vacillating capricious world of personal venture and ambition. He had lived and dealt with workers and engineers, with artists and intellectuals, scientists and businessmen. He was at home in Russia and in Germany, in France and Holland, in Scandinavia and Italy. Everywhere and nowhere. He read enormously, but never could concentrate deeply on one subject. It is not without significance that only once he began to engage in serious research: in the library of the Vatican where he outlined and started an historical study on slavery. Krivitsky was attracted by the human problem in slavery even though he apparently tackled his subject only from the economic angle. Historical materialism was a part of the doctrine to which he had submitted. He was never a free man, never independent. Bonded to the Order of the Bolsheviki, to the Russia of Stalin, he had himself become enslaved to a system he dreaded, admired and never completely understood—though he probably knew more about it than did anyone outside the Kremlin.

Krivitsky did not find time to study the theory of Marxism methodically. The "red professors" whom he abhorred belonged to a later generation. At the age of seventeen, he and his comrades had walked into the revolution "like young girls into the month of May." The revolution demanded their entire lives, the surrender of their critical faculties, the defilement of inherited moral standards. They were eager to sacrifice everything for this cause which in a wave of enthusiasm had lifted them above themselves. In these years, and to them, the revolution seemed to embody the ideas of ideal justice and universal brotherhood. They leaped to the sacrifice. It could not be great enough. The strength of love and faith is measured by that which men are willing to give up for the sake of their love or for their faith. Like the conspirators of "Hell" and "People's Will," the Russian terrorist groups of fifty years ago—like the French Jacobins and the German Anabaptists—these young revolutionists of the Russian border provinces were ready to destroy the world as it was for the sake of the world to be. Anyone who wants to see their faces should go through the pages of Soviet magazines of 1918 to 1920. There he will find the obituary notes of hundreds of young idealists with many scores of pictures. Beacons were shining from their foreheads—beacons, not plan-figures. These were Krivitsky's comrades. He survived them. And of the shining idealism of these two early years a dim ray, for moments only, seemed to reappear, and later—after the collectivization and the purge—even that went out. Nothing remained but desolate emptiness.

Agent in Central Europe

The first great disappointment came with Lenin's New Economic Policy. Private property was re-established, a civil code proclaimed. "Communists must learn business" was the slogan. Thousands of young communists then committed suicide. Krivitsky was not in Russia in these years. Together with the exiled leaders of the ephemeral West Galician Popular Republic, he had gone to Germany. In the guise of returning war prisoners, in long Russian military coats, this little group of Old Bolsheviks landed in Stettin. Lenin, whose principal purpose then was world revolution, had use for them abroad. With several million rubles, they were sent to help organize the revolutionary movement in Central Europe. They had proved themselves valuable in the underground "work" of the revolution; they spoke German, Polish, Ukrainian and knew the Western world. It was a responsible mission.

In the morbid atmosphere of post-War Germany most of these young men stepped out of the ranks. A few fled to America to start a new life with their relatives who had emigrated before the War. Others became speculators or engaged in the fur business. Most of the older Ukrainian Bolsheviks lost their time in sterile factional discussions in Vienna and Prague. Krivitsky remained in line. It was shortly before his departure for Germany that young Samuel Ginzberg of Podvolosciska had adopted this name. Krivitsky is derived from *krivoi* or crooked. *Krivoi,* says A. Aleksandrov's Russian-English dictionary, means also *unjust, false, iniquitous, unrighteous;* Krivitsky, or he who goes in crooked, unrighteous ways. The name is not uncommon in the Western Ukraine. It was given him by the Party. Little did the young idealist of 1919 see in it an omen of the ways he would be compelled to follow.

As a reliable young Bolshevik, he was utilized by his elders as a courier who scurried from Berlin to Vienna and from Vienna to Prague with loads of "illegal" propaganda leaflets, secret instructions and bags full of Czarist 500-ruble bills which the State bank in Moscow printed at full speed—"tackers," as they were called by the underground brokers. In Vienna, in June, 1919, Krivitsky had his first revolutionary experience in Central Europe. In order to force the Social

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Democratic Austrian Government to take sides with the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, the dwarf Communist Party of Austria staged a revolt. The nineteen-year-old Krivitsky marched in the first rows of the demonstrators. The demonstration was crushed in blood. The dead bodies of many scores of workers lay on the pavement. Krivitsky escaped unhurt. In 1921 and 1923, he operated as a revolutionary underground agent in Germany. He disliked his rôle in Germany as much as he learned to love the German workers with whom his mission brought him into contact. The International did not use him in the revolutionary vanguard. He was a member of the Russian party and had to remain "illegal" and underground. During the critical weeks in 1923 which eventually led to the ill-fated uprising in Hamburg, Krivitsky was in Western Germany, one of a score of Russian, Latvian, Caucasian instructors without authority of his own. The party leadership was rigorously centralized. Krivitsky then was but a cog in the machine. Like "Valtin," he became its prisoner. The sly, underground functions of these years gradually pervaded his character. Yet it was his tragic fate to feel and realize the process of corruption which even then began to creep through the communist organizations of Europe. Krivitsky was too intelligent not to notice that they had become pawns in the hands of irresponsible and anonymous politicians in the International.

The picture of the German workers and their prim and devoted families who had been betrayed and killed around him were in his memory when he returned to Russia in 1924. He had never forgotten these people. They spoke to him, they assailed him with their questions during the night. The Russian and the Polish workers he knew were very different from these cultured and self-confident German "proletarians" whose well kept apartments seemed to contradict their revolutionary catechism. This was the last time Krivitsky was in contact with organized and politically agitated workers in Central or Western Europe. In later years, his underground activities compelled him to keep away from the "proletarian" masses. They were the legendary justification of the cause he served. The individual honesty, the spirit of sacrifice of these upright, disciplined and firmly believing German worker-students of communism of 1923-24 cemented his faith. They had looked up for guidance to the young and resourceful representative of Moscow and it was he who derived strength from them.

Return to Russia

In Russia, he was attached, together with others who had distinguished themselves in political secret activities abroad, to the so-called fourth department of the newly organized general staff. Since he worked in one of the central bureaus of the staff and was on the army pay-roll, he was given army rank. The Red Army and especially the fourth department of the staff in this period did not follow the routine which usually governs appointments in the military career. Krivitsky had an unusual knowledge of the West, he had shown himself clever and reliable, and so he became a "Kombrig," or brigade commander, with one rhombus on the facings of his uniform. His brigade, of course, never existed. But Krivitsky, though mainly concerned with political and economic intelligence, took military work very seriously. He even attended classes in the Military Academy and participated in field maneuvers. This was probably the happiest period of his life. It was then that he married Antonina Semionovna Porfiriev, the daughter of a skilled worker in the Putilov plants in Leningrad, a blond tall Russian girl of peasant type. This marriage had a deep influence on Krivitsky. His wife linked him to the Russian people. She was herself a Soviet government employee and in later years accompanied him abroad. In exile she remained a part of the Soviet world attached to this homeless harassed wanderer. He must have thought of Antonina Semionovna and her Russian family when in the course of one of our last discussions in New York, in September, 1939, he defiantly and desperately cried out: "Die Soviet Welt ist eine gute Welt!" (The Soviet world is a good world).

Krivitsky's military assignments led him again to Germany and later to France and Italy. But except for his exploits in Italy where he obtained blueprints of Italian submarines and airplanes from almost under the nose of Mussolini, he was concerned even then more with political than technically military matters. In that period, the intelligence service of the general staff was also the political and economic secret service of the Soviets abroad. The OGPU had not yet invaded the world.

My first meeting with Krivitsky

I first made his acquaintance in Germany, in December, 1925. All I knew of him then was that he was an important emissary of the Bolsheviks. It was only in 1926, when I returned to Berlin for a brief visit and met, in the Soviet Embassy, an unrecognizable Krivitsky—in the meanwhile he had grown a long red beard—that I had a presentiment of the nature of his illegal activities. I was very much intrigued by this mysterious Russian. Never in the course of my international career did I meet a man of such unusual qualities. The information he possessed was vast, his understanding of political events unique. Though our ways led in different directions we developed a lasting mutual sympathy. Later, I met Krivitsky in Paris where we spent many evenings together.

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At that time I planned to found an international economico-political review and we envisaged collaboration. Then, for the first time, I began to ask him direct questions about himself. He remained shrouded in mystery. Soon afterwards, he disappeared from Paris. A few weeks later I got an unsigned postcard from Leningrad. Only after his departure from Paris in 1929, through the indiscretion of a person he had recommended to me, did I learn that he was not only concerned with political and economic information but also with military espionage.

Krivitsky's appointment to the intelligence department of the general staff did not last. When the Soviet State in the period of the first Five Year Plan became organized along its present lines, the party claimed those staff officers who were neither military specialists nor political organizers like Krivitsky's chief, Gamarnik. Krivitsky was one of the victims of this reorganization. Relieved from active service with the rank of "Komdiv" or commander of a division and the right to a second rhombus on the facings of his uniform, he was—after a brief but effective interlude as director of the Technical Institute of War Industries—attached to the foreign division of the OGPU. In the OGPU he was eventually promoted commissar of public safety. The OGPU took over virtually the whole not strictly military Army Intelligence. Krivitsky did not like his association with the OGPU. In several instances he reminded his new chief, Yagoda, that he remained a general staff officer on special duty. The OGPU was an organization even then the object of hatred and contempt among the Soviet people. In 1935, Krivitsky was sent abroad and soon became chief of the Soviet Intelligence Service in Western Europe. About his activities in the West, he has told everything he thought fit for publication.

In his innermost heart the Krivitsky of these years probably no longer had any illusions about the prospects of the revolution, but he was walled up in the party hierarchy and a prisoner of its doctrine. Like many others he tried to silence his doubts with a new kind of faith in the Stalinist Soviet State. This faith he used to call "gossudarstvennoye tchuvstvo," the feeling of State responsibility. It was not so much a definite idea, but a feeling, and it had come to pervade many Bolshevik officials. Men like Krivitsky who were engaged in political underground work abroad, isolated from their friends and most of them also from their families, facing a presumably hostile world under varying disguises, had to lean on something that could support them, hide behind something bigger than themselves, derive inspiration from a purpose. Their own lives seemed negligible to them, astonishingly unreal, fortuitous, insufficient. That they had become so was their tragedy. They felt it more than they could admit to themselves and fled into a world in conformity with their doctrine. In this imaginary world they appeared as "conscious" if cryptic executives of a powerful, ideal State, of the State of the oppressed masses and of the toilers of the world. This was "the feeling of State responsibility," an artificial "unio mystica" with what they called "the creative forces of mankind," an ersatz religion of men who had delivered themselves into the bondage of a soulless system. Krivitsky himself was a relentless realist. He knew that the Soviet Union had no longer much use for intellectuals of his ilk, for internationalists who were still linked up with the old revolutionary generation. Behind him loomed the figure of that great and clean revolutionary Gamarnik, his former chief who at the time of the Tukhatchevsky affair had preceded Krivitsky in "suicide." The idea, however, that his work was directed against Hitler kept him going. It was only when he learned that Stalin was about to capitulate to Hitler that deep despair came over him. When I called on him in The Hague early in June, 1937, he was strangely pale and restless. For many hours we walked up and down the lonely beach of Scheveningen. At times he paused for long minutes as if he had to gather his words from far away. Gropingly, with much apprehension, he hinted at "the possibility" of a collaboration between the Soviet Union and the nazis. After his return from Moscow, he knew, however, that it was in reality a certitude. At dusk, he accompanied me to the street car and suddenly the tenseness which held his fragile frame gave way. As if his heart were breaking he sank down on a bench and on his ashen face was an expression of unspeakable pain. Walter is very ill, I thought.

Nevertheless Krivitsky would have returned to Moscow had it not been for the publication of the diaries of his assistant Ignace Reiss—trapped and killed by the OGPU in September, 1937. These diaries revealed that Krivitsky, under the vivid impression of the horrors of the purge, had thought of breaking away. In his loneliness he had told his old friend and countryman Reiss more than was good for him. Reiss had fled into the open arms of the Trotskyites. In order to show his new party his devotion he had spied on the man who still believed in him. The Trotskyites did not hesitate to draw political capital out of the publication of his papers.

In Paris

The real tragedy of Krivitsky began after his break. The OGPU made an attempt to kidnap him in Marseilles, and later in Paris it is quite possible that they considered another attempt, or at least tried to lure him back to Moscow. There

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were various alarms but nothing happened. I have no doubt that the OGPU could have kidnapped or killed Krivitsky in Paris in spite of the protection afforded him by the French Government. However, it would have been absolutely necessary that such an attempt succeed. A second failure would have called the attention of the entire world to Krivitsky and that was precisely what Stalin wished to avoid. Since Krivitsky was generally accompanied by Government detectives an effective attempt required a very efficient personnel. The OGPU, like most Continental intelligence services, is much less efficient than is generally believed; the number of its "highly qualified technicians" is limited. The principal impediment was Stalin's desire not to strain relations with a friendly French Government which had warned the Soviet Ambassador that Krivitsky enjoyed the protection of the French Republic. It is not probable though that Stalin—had he considered the immediate death or the capture of Krivitsky as of paramount importance—would have had so much regard for smooth diplomatic relations with France at a time when people were so forgetful of the most extraordinary incidents. For the time being it seemed sufficient to minimize Krivitsky's testimony by letting him drop into oblivion.

Over here

In America, Krivitsky's safety was even more precarious. There were ways to find out where he lived. He carried no weapon and was not protected. It is probable of course that responsible Soviet officials, had they foreseen the vehemence of his American articles and their publication in the *Saturday Evening Post*, would have used all means to suppress them. They would certainly not have recoiled from one or two more assassinations. Once the articles had appeared, however, it was difficult to do anything without raising a storm of indignation in America. It is not impossible that Stalin was not so worried by Krivitsky's articles as we generally assume. Krivitsky's revelations of Stalin's long-standing desire to come to terms with Hitler and of his appreciation of the nazi strength may have helped the Russian negotiators of the Soviet-Nazi pact to convince Hitler that the master of the Kremlin was really determined to engage in a policy of collaboration with Germany. When Krivitsky's articles appeared, this was—in the secluded realm of secret diplomacy—the one all important issue. It has always been Stalin's forte to disregard incidentals. He was well aware that the announcement of his pact with the nazi war-lord would expose his foreign adepts to a much harder test than any revelations of Krivitsky. He had listened attentively to Krivitsky's last report in May, 1937, and was too good a psychologist not to know that the frail and nervous Krivitsky who was bound by a thousand threads to the Bolshevik Party would find it hard to stand alone against it in a hostile world that regarded him with suspicion.

What Basoff, his former comrade of the OGPU, whom he met near Times Square early in 1939, really told Krivitsky was this: "We know, you cannot stand it. You will break down under the weight. You will not be able to live by yourself in a world to which you never have belonged." This Krivitsky had told me himself again and again long before he met Basoff. And it was true. His faith in life had been destroyed. This poor haunted man who had started out to build a new world had become incapable of loving anything for its own sake, anything that did not belong to him; nor did he want anything to belong to him. He was wounded to the core like a transplanted tree whose roots cannot draw nutrition from an unaccustomed soil. Wherever he went, he remained walled up under the invisible vault of the Soviet world. Everywhere he saw conspiracy and intrigue. To him even the most simple spontaneous gesture seemed suspect.

There was nobody whom he did not hold capable of betraying him. He lived in constant fear of the many tricks which form the texture of secret diplomacy and underground warfare. He hated them: yet he could no longer depart from them entirely.

At first he sought moral justification for his break with the party in utter selflessness. This man who, as one of the most important Soviet agents abroad, had vast sums at his disposal, left the party and the State he had served for nineteen years so poor that he had to travel third class in the train in which he fled from Dijon to St. Raphael. His style of life remained simple, almost frugal. He was not out to play a rôle. Just as he had declared in France, after the Government had decided to recognize him at his face value and to issue identification papers to him, that he was Samuel Ginzberg of Podvolocziska when he might have called himself, say Walter or Frank, he registered as Walter Ginzberg in the small boarding house in upper Manhattan where we lived together during the first months. Walter, his family and his friends called him. He himself never called himself a general and it was only very reluctantly that he eventually gave in to the insistence of his American associates and authorized the *Saturday Evening Post* to publicize his official Soviet name with the title which, outside of the Soviet Union, corresponded to his former army rank.

In the continental editions of his book he explicitly forbade his publishers to call him a general. When he came to America, he had hoped to live a life of his own, unnoticed, devoted only to his wife and to his child.

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Collaboration

We planned to write a history of the Bolshevik revolution and its reverberations in Europe. Differences on fundamentals prevented the completion of this work. This was in 1938-39. We were both worried by the complacency of the American public. Krivitsky again and again predicted the coming disaster. He foretold almost everything that has happened. At moments, he seemed endowed with a genius for political divination. This was no time for writing history. On the advice and with the devoted assistance of his American literary collaborator, Krivitsky prepared a series of sensational articles. When the *Saturday Evening Post* offered $5,000 for each of these articles, he believed that it was his duty to accept. He did not know how long he would remain alive and he was responsible for his wife and for his child. Antonina Semionovna Porfiriev had courageously shared his exile though she knew that by doing so she exposed her family in Russia to deadly peril. It seems improbable that anyone of those who today slander his memory would have turned down so favorable an offer. The fees Krivitsky received he divided with his American collaborator who struggled hard to draw from him plausible explanations of the unexplainable. It was in the course of these writings that Krivitsky became fully aware of the cleavage between him and those who had never known the problems of the Soviet world and of the revolutionary generation to which he belonged. Their one common denominator was a negative one.

Krivitsky hated Stalin from the bottom of his heart. He had seen him several times and spoke to me about him. In the months following his break, he used to say, "Stalin and Trotsky are the only two consistent Bolsheviks and Stalin is the more consistent." Though he hated him as the man responsible for the sufferings inflicted during the collectivization period upon the peasant relatives of his wife—who in 1917 had been among the first to join the revolution—and later for the suffering brought upon his own comrades during the great purge, he recognized Stalin's crafty and powerful statesmanship.

Personal considerations did not *per se* count for Bolsheviks. Despite the grief they would have felt at the assassination of their closest relatives, Krivitsky, and even his wife, might have overcome it—provided it served the cause. They had "depersonalized" themselves sufficiently to think in class terms only. But the living sources of love and pain cannot be stopped up with the cement of artificial terminology. Under the personal "superstructure" of these Bolsheviks, intent upon wiping out the "ideological superstructure" of society such as religion, philosophy and law, the eternal human motives, even though repressed, were still at work. It was only through the dire suffering of those close to him that Krivitsky perceived the whole ruthlessness of Stalin's régime. Like most of his former comrades, he did not oppose its principle, but thought it was not "necessary" and therefore "criminal" to go so far, and the color of his thought was hate. Later, facing the dilemma of having once more to play a political part, his hatred overshadowed all other considerations. This conflict became particularly acute during the writing of the article "Why They Confessed." Krivitsky writhed in the midst of painful and incomprehensible interpretations. He was torn between the alternatives of justifying the opposition of his dead comrades in order to defend their political honor, and that of revealing the errors of men for whom a rationally correct judgment had always been the one important quality and to whom an error of judgment was equivalent to crime; between the assumption of his American collaborator that they had publicly incriminated themselves to save their lives, and the admission that they wanted to render a last absurd service to the régime by publicly justifying it in the eyes of the Russian people. Most of them, he knew, had lived courageous, selfless lives of sacrifice to a cause which had been his own cause. He did not dare to condemn this cause entirely. The only way out was to charge Stalin personally with the responsibility for the horrible failure of the revolution.

It went beyond his force to state clearly, as he had said to me during the many days and nights we spent in discussion after his flight, that the Zinovievs and Smirnovs, the Bukharins and Rykovs had surrendered because they understood that their conflict with Stalin concerned points of technique. Once in agreement with him on the principle of his policy as it developed after 1927, they were inconsistent in conspiring against it, hampering its consequent application whatever suffering might ensue. Regard for human suffering has never been a Bolshevik argument. The conflict between Stalin and his Bolshevik critics was related only to percentage plan figures and to questions of practical convenience. That was not enough to justify the endangering of the State. Krivitsky told me in Paris that many of the accused had been brought at night from their prison cells in the Lublyanka to Stalin's rooms in the Kremlin where the dictator, in long personal sessions, "persuaded" them of the logic of his policy, of the utter hopelessness of their position, and of what Bolsheviks used to call their "political bankruptcy." The fundamental issue inherent in the Marxist theory of revolution was never raised. Nor did Krivitsky ever have the strength to raise it publicly. He was afraid of losing his "political face" as a former Bolshevik and did not know a positive solution to his dilemma. So he said what he could say: a half truth—explaining the self-abasement of his

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comrades as "a last political manoeuvre," a last sacrifice to the unity of the party.

Toward the end

Krivitsky's death resembles the end of his former comrades in Moscow who solicited their own extinction by accusing themselves of absurd crimes. Stalin once again has won a silent victory. He struggled with the despairing Krivitsky in the lonely hotel room in Washington and was the stronger. Krivitsky died like so many big and little Bolsheviks because he could not live without the Party, without a purpose outside himself, without the legend of the revolution. He was hounded and hounded by the memories of the past.

Since he had no longer a party or a State to stand for, he enhanced, in a last effort, his own political importance: Stalin or Molotov made no statement which was not aimed directly at him.

In his eyes the whole might of the Kremlin was bent on his destruction. That Stalin wished to get rid of him, there is no doubt. If the question whether Krivitsky committed suicide or was killed should be answered according to the principle *cui bono,* we must hold Stalin and his secret police responsible. In a higher sense they are irresponsible. They and Krivitsky were possessed by demons which the revolution had unleashed. From these demons there is no escape. Krivitsky did not come entirely under their spell. He suffered where Stalin and his bureaucracy only inflicted suffering. Krivitsky had retained a conscience. The thousands of victims of the machine of which he so long had been an important part, the scores of men and women he had "broken" because they stood in the way of the machine, the faces of his dead comrades, of those whose lives had become imperilled by his flight were constantly present in his mind. Could so much sacrifice, so much blood, such convulsions have been in vain? Day and night he searched for a rational explanation and could not find it. His anxious questions will always ring in my ears as a reproach: "What can you give, Paul? I have lost everything. What can you give me so that this flight may not have been in vain?" Alas, I could not give him anything but affection, and I was insufficient.

The sensation aroused by his articles and the political passions of his new associates soon drew him once more into the political arena. With all the force he could muster, he struck at Stalin and at the party he had served. When he stepped out of the ranks in October, 1937, he was persuaded that Stalin's régime would not last more than six months. This was his one great political error. Stalin was stronger than he thought and Krivitsky became only more bitter and more desperate. "We have to pay for everything with pain," he once said. The share of pain he carried was too great for him.

In a winter night in 1939 on Riverside Drive, in the course of one of our long and gloomy discussions of the errors of the past, he suddenly pointed at the dim light in the windows of a little chapel behind an iron fence: "Ah, if one could be there and quiet." "Let us go in," I said. The door was closed.

I was born in Berlin, November 20, 1900. I came to this country in June, 1938, as correspondent for Czechoslovak newspapers, deliberately preceding Walter in order to secure an affidavit for him. In December, 1939, I severed relations with him. The literary collaboration which we intended to continue in America had become impossible. There was no longer any agreement between us, either on principles or on methods. Krivitsky had been drawn into new associations. Our ways parted.

From January, 1936, on I saw Walter Krivitsky frequently. I had first known him in 1925, in Germany. In 1936, on his return from Russia, he called on me in Paris. At that time I was on the board of the Committee for Freedom in Germany under the chairmanship of Heinrich Mann.

I then abandoned all associations with the various anti-fascist organizations with which I had come in contact through my open letter to the World's Students Congress, following my voluntary resignation from various official international bodies in protest against the nazi régime which, I held, "had made constructive international cooperation impossible."

Instead, I now suggested to a number of reliable friends in independent positions the formation of a loose group for personal and direct action against the nazis. "Men and women of ill will" toward Hitler and his associates, we used our influence quietly to counteract nazi machinations abroad and to establish contacts with morally conservative and politically liberal circles in Germany, Austria and Italy. We gladly sought Krivitsky's collaboration. Though a few of the younger members of our group in post-war years had been connected with the revolutionary movement in Central Europe, there was at that time not one communist among us. My association with Krivitsky was based solely on our one common purpose: action against Nazism and Fascism, effective action by men in responsible position rather than public oratory.

In these years I contributed to a number of French, British and American newspapers and magazines. In spring 1936, I was appointed Technical Adviser at the Paris International Exposition and traffic adviser to the official freight agencies of French railways.

In October, 1937, I helped to organize Krivitsky's flight from his OGPU guards and to identify him with the French authorities. In 1937/38, we collaborated on his first series of articles, which were published in the leading Social Democratic newspapers of Europe and to a large extent included in his American articles written in collaboration with Isaac Don Levine.

My various official functions in international administration: Director of the International Chamber of Commerce, permanent secretarial delegate to the Communications and Transit Organization of the League of Nations and numerous other governmental and private international bodies. Secretary General, Danube Navigation Conference. Attached to Economic Section, Institute of Comparative Legislation, University of Paris.

I am working on a book on Georges Mandel and am looking for American associates to found a non-sectarian, morally reactionary, politically constructive weekly magazine to deal on an international scope with the men, ideas and events of our time, spiritual, political, economic and technical. A fine team of conservative Austrian, French, German, Italian, Scandinavian and Swiss writers await American collaboration.

I came to this country on a French passport. Today, I am a Hebrew-Christian without a country. The best of my generation are dead or "broken." Those who survived are not the best. I am a survivor.

PAUL WOHL.

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Well—What Next?

The likely price to be paid for a brave new world.

By J. L. Benvenisti

BY THE TIME these lines are in print, world-shaking events may have happened. It is, however, possible that we shall still be in that state of relative calm that we have enjoyed for the past two months. Whichever way things eventuate, I am inclined to think that this winter will have proved to be a significant one for the future of this country and perhaps for others as well.

This relative calm has been broken by a historic event, the second great fire of London, and perhaps the most astonishing thing about Londoners as they see so much of the heart of their city a charred ruin is their real cheerfulness. I do not mean the much advertised cheerfulness of the British Tommy; I do not mean anything in the least heroic. I mean that a great many of us are secretly quite pleased about that fire. The Germans taunted us with cynicism when we recently said that Hitler was solving our slum problem. But the feeling was perfectly genuine, and there is now in the air a great sense of rubbish being cleared away.

It is the great spring cleaning. It is, we feel, the beginning of the clean-up of all the lumber left us by the Victorians. It is the clearing away of the bones of Bentham, of Gradgrind and of all the dreary men of Manchester who made this city. For though London is a city to which every century has made a contribution, though Norman and Tudor mingle with the modern palace of steel and glass, yet the predominant spirit in all its buildings is still that of Manchester with its utilitarianism masked behind Victorian Gothic. "Manchester" permeates the city (I speak as one who knows and loves the old harridan) as the smell of cooking cabbage permeates a house.

Among the things destroyed have been some fine monuments, especially the Wren churches. Well, that is to be regretted, but anybody who said that we were weeping our eyes out about them would be guilty of an inexactitude. We say, "Isn't it a shame about those lovely Wren churches," and then get talking about something that really interests us, say, General Wavell's really magnificent success in Africa, or Charlie Chaplin's new film, or the shortage of razor blades.

Most of us did not even know the names of a great number of these churches. It appears there was one which was called St. Andrew-in-the-Wardrobe, the very existence of which had hitherto entirely escaped me. It seems a pity now that I should have lived so long without knowing there was a church with a name like that, and if they rebuild St. Andrew-in-the-Wardrobe I shall certainly try to find out what Saint Andrew was doing there.

Well, what next?

All these things, however, disappear behind the great question, "Well, what next?" What sort of a world is going to rise up in place of the one that is now being laid in ruins? It is extraordinary how prevalent this inquiring mood is at the moment. I was recently traveling in the train with an elderly gentleman and a middle-aged lady. The former had had most of his house blown away, and the poor lady, the whole of it. What is more, as far as I could gather from her account, she was inside the house when they did the blowing. Yet neither seemed to mind very much. The chief comment of all these people was: "It is all so *interesting;* it is such an interesting age to live in." The lady in particular kept reiterating this statement as though it were the refrain of a comic song. It struck me at the time as an odd way of looking at things, but I have recently had the experience of quite a number of people of this class (they were obviously well-to-do—as far as anybody in England is well-to-do) adopting just this tone. Indeed if the attitude of people of this sort could be summed up in so many words, it would be expressed something like this: "Well, we know that we have had our day and that our performance as leaders was perhaps not all that it might have been, but we also know that because you are English you will neither murder us nor kick us into the street. You cannot tax us more than we are taxed already, and so there is nothing to do now but to sit back and see what sort of a show *you* people put up," "you" being the new state-educated proletariat, the planners, the sociological intellectuals, labor and the Great-Rosy-Dawners generally.

These gentry just at the moment are very much to the fore. There has been a spate of literature of late on the new Britain that is to come into being after the war, with guaranteed employment,

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family allowances, model housing estates for everybody (except, presumably, poor journalists who will hastily seek alternative accommodation) and equal educational opportunity for all. People seem to want this kind of thing, and if they really want it, we all sincerely hope that they will get it—and a great deal of what they apparently do want—the security of employment, for instance—would be, without any sort of qualification, excellent. All that the more thoughtful of us are worrying about is whether they realize what getting it will really mean. Ranging rather widely I take a typical passage from the press, the implications of which seem to me interesting.

> President Roosevelt's lend-and-lease program has met with a particularly warm reception in Lancashire. It is felt that American economy has now grasped the fundamental conception that it is only trade, as opposed to the mere movement of capital, which can ultimately benefit a community.
>
> For this reason it is appreciated that settlement of any indebtedness by this country to the US is not going to be accomplished by money payment so much as by the provision of goods and services.
>
> This is taken to indicate, in turn, that industrial England may look forward to a long period of prosperity after the war while the goods are manufactured with which to repay America.
>
> In view of the size of the British national debt which is expected to develop following the war, it is hardly expected that taxation will be reduced to such an extent as to make it possible for any profits commensurate with normal expectations to be earned, but it is at least considered certain that a long period of "profitless prosperity" may be anticipated.

Profit?

Now that passage in itself seems innocent enough, but to one whose ear is attuned to its undertones there is just a little more in it than the superficial reader would realize; for if the truth were known many who are now talking about a "profitless prosperity" after the war are almost as pleased at the prospect of an absence of profits as they are about that of prosperity. The fact of the matter is that all this Rosy Dawnism that is so much in vogue over here is mixed up with a good deal of social resentment, and that kind of feeling is dangerous because it is the enemy of truth. Britain is no worse in this respect than any other country. Indeed her strong aristocratic tradition possibly causes such sentiments to be milder than they are elsewhere, but the sentiments are there.

Now hard feelings about the rich—whom we may for argument's sake here identify with the profit earners—are a very old human habit, and unregenerate mankind has always found a certain satisfaction in the thought of rich men suffering abasement. "Howl now, ye rich men," etc. The attitude has almost become hallowed by tradition, though it is to be noted that it was not that of Our Lord, Who seemed to have for the rich a kind of pitying solicitude. Since mankind has always been going on in this way some people might say that not much harm will be done if it goes on a little longer. Yet I cannot help fearing that all this unrealism that this kind of sentiment tends to generate, this turning away from the brute facts of life and economics, will one day be followed by a somewhat rude awakening.

It is the beginning of economic wisdom to realize that distributed profits and the spending incomes of the rich generally are nothing but a little froth on the economic pot and in particular that rich people's spending money is largely air; it does not push the cogs of the industrial machine. Economists have on the whole laid insufficient stress on the curious doubling up process to which rich people's money is subject. The rich man is continually handing out money for goods and services which are sold to him at fancy prices, or for considerations which do not amount to a genuine service at all. The result is that every rich man's income tends to generate a number of other incomes which do not reflect any process of physical work or physical consumption. It may indeed be said that it is not the poor but the rich who live by taking in each other's washing.

It can, of course, be argued that the charge against the rich and the profit earners is not so much that they constitute an economic burden, but that the way they use resources does not conduce to an optimum satisfaction of needs. It is possible that there is some truth in this—but just how much truth? It is possible that another economic order would make a better use of resources than that made by liberalistic capitalism. I am inclined to think, on balance, that it would. I am certainly inclined to think that the world problem of unemployment is soluble, and that liberalistic capitalism will not solve it without a very wide measure of state interference. But how large is the measure of possible improvement and what is the price we must pay for it? That is the pertinent question.

Need for savings

Now it is on that very point that we are in my opinion suffering from the most fantastic overestimates, and because, as the American economy begins to resemble the British economy of war, ideas will necessarily jump frontiers, this tendency to overestimate will surely soon become an American concern. The fundamental fallacy that lies at the bottom of all this curious intellectual blundering is the idea that the need for saving has disappeared, and the complete ignoring of the function of profits as the chief creators of savings. That is where we get back to social resentment, for the whole concept of profit has become so charged with moral and emotional content that many people can no longer think straight about the matter at all. Indeed to many people the mere making of a profit, whether distributed or undistributed, seems already to be something in the nature of a mortal sin.

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It might of course be perfectly possible to create savings, by which I mean the physical capital assets which provide for the community's future, by some other means than out of profits, but the point is that nobody seems to be concerning themselves with any alternative means of creating them. The need for creating savings seems to be something which has simply not penetrated the popular mind. Even our Leftist intellectuals seem to have nothing to say on the matter, despite the example of their beloved communist Russia which provides us with one of the most brutal and ruthless instances of forced saving known to human history.

At the moment we are, as I have already said, being inundated with a spate of newspaper and magazine articles concerning this better Britain that is to arise after the war, but not a word is being said about the cost. Not a word is being said of the fact that these garden cities, convalescent homes, village centers and the rest of it, to say nothing of our reconstituted and re-equipped agriculture, can only come into being as the result of a long process of enforced abstinence from consumption at least as severe as that imposed on us by the economy of war.

Can we then really look forward to a period in which we shall be so very much better off than we are now? In one particular, undoubtedly yes. I have already said that I believe the problem of unemployment to be soluble. It is within the competence of the human will to eliminate this dreadful scourge from all the face of the earth—but at a price.

Price equality

"Quadragesimo Anno," in a passage the importance of which has been too little recognized, has clearly shown us the key. It lies in the equation of agricultural and industrial prices which will ensure the agricultural producer a sufficient reward to enable him to provide the entire community with a sufficiency of food and to receive its industrial products in return. America has been a pioneer in seizing on this principle, but largely by introducing an artificial scarcity which equated supply with the low purchasing power of the town. The complimentary principle of increasing purchasing margins by a lowering of industrial costs has nowhere yet been attempted with sufficient determination. Yet it is this which enables agricultural production not only to maintain its price but also to expand—and at the same time to absorb (directly or indirectly) those whom the "cost cutting" process has rendered redundant. In one form or other these are the principles which not only Britain and America but the whole civilized world must surely ultimately adopt.

What will be the effect of the application of these principles? Which are the cost factors that must obviously be eliminated in order that total

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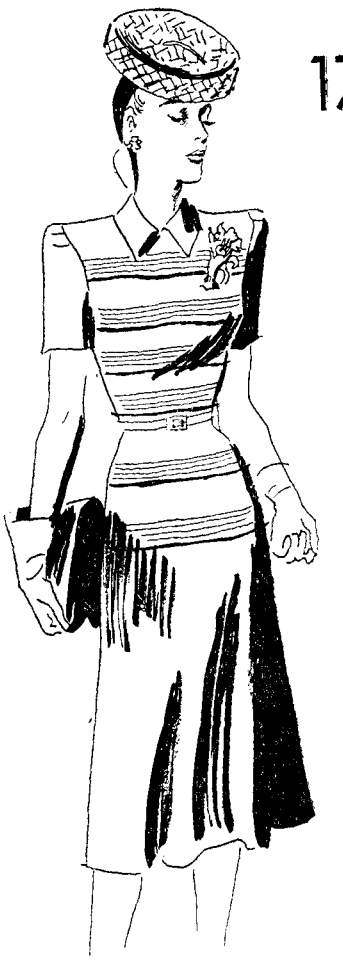

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production and total purchases may be increased? Are they not clearly those that are bound up with the crushing burden of selling costs? It is the curse of our economy that every cost reduction that science introduces in the factory is promptly offset by some new addition to our already inflated selling costs. Clearly therefore the essential prerequisite to security is the transfer of a large part of the class now engaged in various forms of merchanting to some form of physically productive activity. Mr. Colin Clark in his latest book, "The Economics of Social Progress," has very clearly pointed out that it is production and not distribution that is the world's essential problem. Mankind has not yet emancipated itself from its eternal difficulty of a paucity of means, and the sooner we recognize this fact the better.

What it comes to

What it all amounts to is this. The people that must pay the price for social security are not the rich, who are irrelevant and economically insignificant, but the middle class, and the irony of the situation arises from the fact that it is just among this class that the dyed-in-the-wool Utopians, the Rosy-Dawners *par excellence,* proliferate most extensively. Nobody of course suggests that these people should be "liquidated" in the communist manner; that is something which Western Christian civilization would not tolerate, nor is there any need for it; but they must undoubtedly face a change of status and a loss of amenities and I sometimes wonder how many of them among those now engaged in sociological day-dreaming realize that they are really contemplating their own social suicide.

Let me carry this enquiry a little further. In an article recently published in these pages I discussed the growing recognition of claims by backward peoples to equality of status with the Christian civilizations of the West. This generous tendency is applauded, and to my mind rightly applauded, by the same radical and reforming elements who are the energizing force of the "Better Britain" movement.

But how will this aspiration be realized? How can the West implement these promises except by resuming, though doubtless in an altered and modified form, its traditional rôle of an exporter of capital? The backward peoples are crying out for just one thing, and that is capital. They need modern and scientific exploitation of their own resources. They need more hygienic conditions of living. They need schools, hospitals and railways. It is the high mission of the West to give them these things, but in the last resort these things must come out of the pocket of the common man and what I want to know is simply this: does the common man realize the part for which he has cast himself? Does he realize the nature of this new White Man's Burden that he is laying upon his shoulders? Has he calculated it in the true terms of dollars and cents? Frankly I doubt whether he has, and so long as this omission is unremedied, he is in the position of a drawer of postdated cheques which are as yet unprovided for.

If the tone of this article is somewhat austere, I am not discouraged on that account. I do not wish to be understood as saying that these aspirations of which I have taken note are impossibilist. Far from it. I ardently hope that they will be realized, but I also want people to be clear about the price, which is nothing less than the Cross of Christian abnegation and Christian fraternal love. There are no short cuts to Paradise.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

AND STILL it is February, press month, for the few Catholics who really take any serious interest in the problems of the press; so let us go on with some reflections suggested by last week's piece, with a few remarks based upon certain opinions, or prejudices, expressed by Mr. Westbrook Pegler, one of Mr. Roy Howard's obedient night-and-day shifts of mass production "columnists." Since the editorial writers of nearly all papers have lost what influence they once possessed, it is, as everybody—and for once that word seems accurately used—as everybody knows, the columnists who are the big guns of the armies of the press. Since Heywood Broun died, so at least it seems to me, who misses his honest, sincere, morally righteous work so much, among the many "by-line" stars hired by Mr. Howard to express his singular opinions, or prejudices, only Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt stands apart from her colleagues, so far as her personal independence—which quality of the professional, working journalist I am chiefly interested in here—is concerned. The others all appear to be docile hired hands in Mr. Howard's word-factory.

Mr. Pegler, it is true, is not important, so far as his opinions or prejudices enter into consideration. But it is important for intelligent citizens to understand how badly our daily press is out of balance in the grave matter of ultimate responsibility for the policies pursued by the millionaire owners of great and little chains of papers mostly appealing—or trying to appeal—to "the masses."

It was a piece of abusive writing by Mr. Pegler published some time ago (December 13) in the New York *World-Telegram* that opened up this larger topic. I kept it by me, and read it more than once; because it suggested the more important things that its labored and not very happy "wise-cracks" did not deal with. What he was not very successfully trying to do was to castigate THE COMMONWEAL'S fellow weeklies, *The Nation,* and *The New Republic,* and their editors.

We of THE COMMONWEAL, it is true, often differ from

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the opinions of our confreres on *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. Probably, we shall be obliged to go on doing so in whatever future may be permitted to the three of us, and to the rest of the little magazines now so hard-pressed in their ceaseless fighting for ideals and ideas. However wrong-headedly at times they and we may fight, nevertheless our radical neighbors fight with obvious sincerity, animated by faith that human intelligence, when exerted in the service of human aspirations after a better and happier and freer life for all of us may get something done to secure that life.

Perhaps such work is meant by an inscrutable Providence to benefit even those who scorn it, and who only mock at, never reason with, the queer individuals who spend their lives in such a (financially) feeble fashion. Our castigators—you cannot call them our critics—indulge their contempt for intellectuals, I suppose, principally in order to amuse their own big-paying bosses and customers, the owners and exploiters of the so-called popular press. May God save the populace! for such a press is one of the worst enemies ever to be arrayed against the true interests of a people desirous above all things to live and let live and to find and share true liberty and to seek wherever it is to be found the dream of a happiness that is the final, yet always receding, goal of mankind.

I could not, however, read Mr. Pegler on this occasion with the customary ease and swiftness made possible by that skillful writer's ordinary (or, perhaps, extraordinary) felicity of style. His first sentence, a paragraph in length, threw me off the smooth track along which usually Mr. Pegler rushes his multitudinous customers. It is the millions of pennies from those customers that maintain this expert designer of models for mass-production columns for the newspaper syndicate industry in such swanky luxury that Mammon's chief public-relations agency, the *Saturday Evening Post,* recently devoted a long article to its description, and Mr. Pegler's glorification. Probably, most of these readers are not possessed of a more ample vocabulary than that penny-a-line craftsman in Mr. Pegler's word-business, the present writer. Therefore, I am afraid that there may be a great decline in their numbers, and a consequent depression in the market-demand for Pegleristic entertainment and enlightenment, if Mr. Pegler continues to use so many long words in abusing other writers for the same deplorable habit.

Well, if that should happen—I trust it won't—Mr. Pegler will have less cause to worry over one of his many pet hates; to wit, the income tax collectors; and have more time to bone up on the dictionary; maybe, give him time enough, and sufficient loss of income, he may yet take a high rank among the "long-word intellectuals" whom he razzes so raucously in this particular piece of Peglerism. And how welcome he would be—if he also changed his outworn views of such problems as the subject of labor unionism! If he returned to his first respect for social justice, abandoned when he entered the upper-bracket class of income tax-payers and dodgers.

The first of Mr. Pegler's words to check me in my subway perusal of "Fair Enough" (the standing title of his daily blast, and a true description of its contents, when

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one remembers how consistently its author seems to consider that fairness is a matter of the letter of journalism, not of its spirit—the letter that kills, not the spirit that makes truth live and rule) was that importation from French sources, *contretemps*. Of course in fairness to myself as well as in the more important matter of being fair enough, I hope, to Westbrook Pegler, I must claim that I did have a woozy notion that the word signified an awkward mess of some kind or other. But my vague notion was not exact enough to aid me in what even then, hurtling along in the subway rush, and the rush of Mr. Pegler's prose, I wanted to do, namely, really to get at what Mr. Pegler himself thinks he is trying to do in such a performance as his acrimonious assault on THE COMMONWEAL's friendly neighbors. Such intellectual journals belong to a special department of metropolitan journalism, which Mr. Pegler quaintly calls (God alone, I should imagine, knows why) the "butchers' paper magazines, to wit, *The Nation,* whose editor is Miss Freda Kirchwey, and *The New Republic,* whose editor is Mr. Bruce Bliven (pronounced Blether, I believe)."

But at the very tail-end of that first stinging sentence (at least, apparently it was meant to sting its victims—but maybe the lash twisted about and flicked Mr. Pegler's own tough hide) there was that other dictionary-dug-out word, *Blether,* which again threw me off the track of my ruminations. These had been concerned with Mr. W. Pegler and his ilk (look that word up, please, Mr. Pegler)—I mean the many robustious Scripps-Howard columnists, like iron-panted General Hugh Johnson and that screaming eagle of aviation hysteria, Major Al Williams. I bear in mind also their millionaire bosses and pay-masters of that mammoth manufactory of mass-production wordage and cartoonage and mental roughage, and, above all, of coverage for the advertising that brings home the bacon for all concerned, the Scripps-Howard newspapers. Also, *their* ilk, the other people who produce the ever-spawning mass of "popular" journals (God save the populace!) which is so disastrously, though perhaps only incidentally, building up support for the thesis of the enemies of democracy, that democracy is degenerate, and soon will be dead. Walter Winchell strengthens their case even more than Westbrook Pegler. Bernarr Macfadden almost clinches it. William Griffin, of the Sunday scream, the New York *Enquirer* (which needs an inquiry directed at it, and its backers) just about closes it in favor of the prosecution.

Worthy daily journalism is represented quite fully in New York, but not with the specialized attention to certain rather neglected economic and moral problems which is given chiefly by the intellectual weeklies. There are, however, such respectable papers as the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune* and *PM*. But I hold the Howard papers to be a thoroughly deplorable influence, and Mr. Pegler's part in it, because the policy of my paper, like *The Nation* and *The New Republic,* is right. For our policy and their policy is one of fairness and of hard working for social justice. But the policy of the Howard press is wrong. It ignores social justice, and social justice is the supreme objective of the intellectual press Mr. Pegler so mistakenly traduces.

THE COMMONWEAL—and we try our best to justify that title—and certain other Catholic journals happen not to be controlled by rich or ignorant Catholics to whom the Papal teachings on social justice are unknown or disregarded, or not taken seriously. For there are, unfortunately, Catholic papers to whom Papal teachings are merely abstract principles to be respectfully alluded to but not carried out in action so long as that simple step would be offensive to certain rich and so-called "leading Catholics," who may be only leading their fellow Catholics

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backward, instead of forward with the socially awakened bishops and clergy, under the banner of Leo XIII's socially revolutionary encyclicals. But THE COMMONWEAL understands, as our non-Catholic but sincerely humanitarian intellectual fellow journals understand, the great fact which is the key to the understanding of the world-crisis of this age. Namely, so vast and oppressive is the mass of needless poverty oppressing humanity even to despair—because it has pressed upon mankind too long and too heavily without the more fortunate members of the human family trying seriously to solve the problem—that now their despair has become a revolutionary explosive.

The Stage & Screen

Claudia

AT LAST the season has brought us a play by an American dramatist for which we can throw up our hats—"Claudia" is a delightful comedy, poignant, witty, original in the characterization of its chief protagonist. In it Rose Franken fulfills the promise she showed in "Another Language." "Claudia" is as the title indicates the tale of Claudia; perhaps a study of her character rather than a tale. When it opens she is married to an older man, very much in love with him, but distressed that he doesn't make more of a fuss over her. She flirts dangerously with an Englishman to prove to herself and to her husband that she is attractive. Later she discovers that her mother whom she adores is hopelessly ill, and this awakens and matures her. This is the bare bones of the story. What counts is the study of Claudia herself, her adolescent whimsicality, her humor, the constancy of her love both for her husband and her mother. "Claudia" makes conjugal fidelity intensely interesting. Its virtues are the old-fashioned and eternal ones. Moreover in Claudia, Miss Franken has created a real and original character, one which might have come from the brain of J. M. Barrie. Hers is a character not altogether easy to describe, indeed there are things in it which might bear more than one interpretation. But this is not a defect. Isn't Hamlet living proof of this? But though some of the intricacies of Claudia's very feminine nature may baffle at first view, her main lines are plain. She is a tender, loving, spontaneous, and, at bottom, wise little woman, a little woman once met impossible to forget. Claudia is the only character I have encountered on the stage in the last few years who seems to me worthy to be hung in the portrait gallery of dramatic literature.

How much this is due to the superb acting of the part by Dorothy McGuire I don't know, but Miss McGuire certainly gives it life, vitality, charm, and intelligence. In it she becomes on the distaff side the find of the year. Her husband is played by Donald Cook, and he gives a sincere, humorous, understanding enactment. Claudia's mother is Frances Starr, an infinitely better actress in her maturity than she was in the days when she was a

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Belasco lead. John Williams as the "British Englishman" gives another of his polished and whimsical performances, Olga Baclanova is amusing as the opera singer, and Adrienne Gessner and Frank Tweddell give moving enactments of the two servants. A word too must be said for Miss Franken's direction. It is superb in its variety and interpretive invention.

In short I found "Claudia" both for the play itself and the perfection of its acting ensemble the treat of the year so far. And there is something else that ought to be mentioned. Miss Franken is one of those rare playwrights whose dialogue is not entirely on the surface, who say more than the mere words. Her sentences not only express, they imply. Because of this her characters are three dimensional; they live a secret as well as a public life. We go away from the theatre and they are still with us; they project themselves into our own lives. I suppose the secret of this is that the dramatist possesses imagination. This is a rare gift anywhere, and especially rare in American dramatists. Mr. Behrman has it, and Eugene O'Neill, sometimes Maxwell Anderson. In "Claudia" Rose Franken joins their company. (*At the Booth Theatre.*) GRENVILLE VERNON.

Life Is Real: Life Is

THE CURRENT anti-nazi movie is always the most grim, real and depressing anti-nazi movie. *"So Ends Our Night"* is the current anti-nazi movie. Made from Talbot Jenning's powerful screenplay based on Erich Maria Remarque's "Flotsam," it tells a pathetic tale of the stream of German refugees without passports who are always on the march. With no legal right to live anywhere, they go to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, France. Then where? South America? United States? John Cromwell has directed the individual stories (which are really variations of the pitiful man-without-a-country theme) with a strange combination of documentary realism, heart-breaking sentimentality, a theatrical quality of unreality and Eugene O'Neill's thinking-out-loud technique. The result, though somewhat muddled, is a moving indictment against the nazi system and a stirring plea for refuge of the victims of the system. Outstanding is the film's unusually large and good cast: Fredric March, as a hard, defiant escapee from a concentration camp, finally returns to Germany to see his dying wife (Frances Dee); Margaret Sullavan, as a Jewish girl embittered by an unhappy love affair with a nazi, eventually finds kindness and real love; Glenn Ford, excellent in his first important rôle, as a young refugee learns to be calloused, face life and fight to live; and Erich von Stroheim, Anna Sten, Leonid Kinskey, Alexander Granach, Roman Bohnen, Sig Rumann. What the film loses by becoming melodramatic with the lives of too many characters, it gains in the high quality of the acting embellished with William Cameron Menzies's good production designs and the unifying musical score of Louis Gruenberg.

Jitterbugs and such will probably like *"You're the One"* because Bonnie Baker (of "Oh Johnny" fame) and Orrin Tucker and his band are in it. Other movie-goers will be annoyed with Ralph Murphy's commonplace direction, Gene Markey's lifeless script about orchestra leaders contesting for a radio program, Albert Dekker's performance as a leader who is an "overstuffed satyr." They will also lament the wasted comic talents of Edward Everett Horton, Teddy Hart, Walter Catlett and Jerry Colonna.

Really serious movie-goers might rightly be disturbed over the extravagant costs of such tripe as "You're the One" when they see the fine and worthwhile 26-minute short that was made by Film Associates on very little money. *"One Tenth of Our Nation"* deals with Negro education and it is one of the first documentary films to discuss Negroes from their own point of view. Although Negro Maurice Ellis reads the simple and intelligent narration extremely well and Roy Harris's score is in keeping with the theme, it is the camera itself that effectively portrays the overcrowded, one-room Southern schools, the Negro's unfortunate economic situation, the irony of what Negroes do without in this land of plenty and their struggle for advancement in higher educational and professional lines. The first Africans were brought here 300 years ago to help clear the wilderness and farm the land. Now Negroes comprise one tenth of our population. Democracy fails if it neglects to give them opportunities to become school teachers, nurses, doctors, leaders to instruct their own people how to live decently. Although the film shows some of the better Negro high schools and colleges in the South, the picture is on the whole discouraging. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Briefer Reviews

Historical Introduction to the Theory of Law. J. Walter Jones. Oxford. $4.00.

INTRODUCES the reader to the main currents of legal thought in Europe and America. The theories of the civilians, the natural law, historical and code schools are sketched. The effect of law upon economics, the views of the metaphysicians, the nazi, fascist and communist advocacy of "revolutionary legality" are some of the questions treated in this extraordinarily good book. Indispensable for those who seek a broader understanding of the problems of jurisprudence.

Random Harvest. James Hilton. Little. $2.50.

THE NEW best-seller by the author of "Lost Horizon" and "Goodbye Mr. Chips" is for the most part rather quiet and uneventful. The hero is an amnesia victim of the last war. The story of his escape from a military hospital and of the girl who sheltered him is the really stirring part. Those latter pages will have a strong appeal for all lovers of romance.

Lone Star Preacher. John W. Thomason, Jr. Scribner. $2.75.

THE IMAGINARY JOURNAL of a shaggy, red-headed and red-bearded Texas chaplain who became a fighting officer in the Confederate army gives a convincing first-hand impression of what fighting was like in the Civil War. The book is copiously illustrated with crude but appropriate pen and ink drawings. It contains many a personal anecdote of the Southern leaders. Genuinely effective presentation.

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NEXT WEEK

The extent of the article on Walter G. Krivitsky in this issue has meant the postponement of two important articles until next week. To begin with, there is the lively yet courteous exchange of letters on the subject of Henri Bergson by Raïssa Maritain and Dr. Adolph Oko, former librarian at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Mme. Maritain's original article in the January 17th issue aroused such intense interest on the part of COMMONWEAL readers and in the academic world that it was a hard decision to postpone this happy interchange.

C. G. Paulding has had another week to work on his article OUR INEVITABLE ISOLATION. In setting down his well pondered position on the war, Mr. Paulding reaches the unhappy conclusion that the difficulty of keeping at a pitch our warm feelings for our suffering fellow-men in various parts of the world is well nigh insuperable. It is feasible, of course, on the spiritual plane but the human and political aspects of our nature tend to keep us tragically apart. His latest personal essay will be warmly welcomed by various Paulding "fans."

Louis J. A. Mercier of Harvard University, author of "The Challenge of Humanism" and other books, has sent THE COMMONWEAL an important documentary study of the French régime which took over on the defeat of the armies in the field last summer. THE NEW FRENCH REGIME devotes a major part of its interest to the ideas of Marshal Pétain which Professor Mercier believes have been badly neglected by the secular press. The author makes this prediction, "So long as Marshal Petain is in control France will make no move detrimental to England."

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The Inner Forum

THE LENTEN regulations announced at all parish churches on Quinquagesima Sunday, February 23, and in current issues of many diocesan papers, go back for many centuries. For the first three centuries there was a wide diversity in the observance of that season of penance. One of the earliest known documents referring specifically to the observance is the "Festal Letters" of Saint Athanasius in 331, wherein a period of forty days' fast preceding the stricter fast of Holy Week was enjoined. Eight years later after visiting Rome and many parts of Europe Saint Athanasius reported that this observance was universal.

The strictness of the fast in earlier days may be gathered from the rule indicated by Saint Gregory to Saint Augustine of England (sixth century): "We abstain from flesh meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs." The practice of abstaining from food until evening was so widespread that the author of the "Micrologus" in the eleventh century maintained that those who took food before evening did not observe the fast according to the canons of the Church. By the end of the thirteenth century, however, the Franciscan, Richard Middleton, held—partly on the grounds of current usage—that a Catholic who ate his dinner at noon did not thereby break the lenten fast.

The practice of the light collation goes back to the ninth century when the Council of Aix La Chappelle sanctioned a drink of water or some other beverage after the labor of the day even in monastic houses. The name, in fact, comes from the practice of reading aloud the *Collationes* or Conferences of Abbot Cassian at table in the evening. In the course of the centuries the rigor of the lenten fast has been further mitigated, particularly in the last few centuries.

The word Lent seems to have no particular religious significance. The word is of German derivation and originally referred to the spring season. In Latin the term is *quadragesima,* while in the romance languages the name is some derivative of the Latin one—cf. the French *carême.* The Greek name for Lent is also the equivalent of the English fortieth. The weight of the testimony is against the theory that Lent is of apostolic origin. Preparation for Easter was in the very earliest days apparently a severe fast of no more than one week's duration.

As Dom Virgil Michel says in "The Liturgy of The Church," "A Christian Lent can never be entirely sad. The Benedictus antiphon of Ash Wednesday has from the start emphasized the very first gospel words of Lent: 'When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad.' With the fourth Sunday the pent up spiritual joy in the true member of Christ bursts forth in anticipation of the Easter joy to come (Laetare Sunday)."

CONTRIBUTORS

Paul WOHL has prepared a statement on his own career and record which is published as an appendix to his article (see page 68).

J. L. BENVENISTI is an old friend of COMMONWEAL readers. He contributes regularly to the *English Review* and has written a number of books on economic and social questions.

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